

OCT - 8 1915

Reprinted from **The Annals** of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, Philadelphia, September, 1915.
Publication No. 921.

THE WAR AND IMMIGRATION

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Those innumerable streams of population which have been flowing from the vast reservoirs of peoples in Europe and which have been draining to the United States during the past decade more than 1,000,000 immigrants annually, are today temporarily shut off by the great European war. Of the sources of the largest part of our recent immigration, all, including Italy, are now involved in the war.

Immigration from Europe in 1914 slightly exceeded 1,058,000. As much as four-fifths—more than 800,000—came from the three countries, Italy, Austria-Hungary and Russia. Naturally one conclusion is that comparatively little immigration now comes from the United Kingdom, Germany, France, all of which are involved in the war, and the Scandinavian countries. This corresponds with the facts. Since 1880 there has taken place a most remarkable transformation in the racial composition of our immigration stream by which western European nationalities of Teutonic and Celtic stock gave place to those from southeastern Europe of Slavonic, Lettic, Italic, Finnic and Chaldean descent—from the peoples of Germany, Ireland, England, Scotland, Wales, and the Scandinavian countries to those from Russia, Austria-Hungary, and Italy.

Of the total arrivals from among those groups giving to us the greater part of our immigration in 1914, Italians were the most numerous. Their proportion was more than one-third, their number exceeded 296,000. Hebrews came next with a porportion of 16 per cent—138,000. Polish immigrants were nearly fifteen out of every one hundred—a total of nearly 123,000. Russians and Magyars came to 5 per cent each—to about 45,000. These five groups account for more than four-fifths of our last yearly immigration from Europe. Croatians and Slovenians, Ruthenians, Slovaks, Roumanians, Lithuanians, Finns, and Bohemians and Moravians were numerically in the order given.

A characteristic feature of most of this immigration, and espe-

cially that from Austria-Hungary and Russia, is the fact that only a very small proportion is of the race politically dominant in the countries from which it comes. Virtually all our immigration from Russia, for instance,—as much as ninety-seven out of every one hundred—is non-Russian; it is Jewish, Polish, Lithuanian, German, Finnish and Lettish. The last census enumeration of our foreign born from Russia shows that more than one-half—nearly fifty-two out of every one hundred—have Yiddish and Hebrew for their mother tongue. More than one-fourth speak Polish. Lithuanian and German come next in order as the mother tongue of our foreign born from Russia. Those speaking Russian amount to 3 per cent only of all those here reporting Russia as their country of birth.

The correct interpretation of these facts flows naturally from their mere presentation. Economic distress accompanies governmental oppression, with its usual political, religious and social persecution based upon racial antipathies, especially where one race becomes entrenched in power over subject races. This explains and will continue as the explanation of much of our immigration. Racial animosities expressed through governmental acts are often cruel and insufferable and result in emigration wherever such escape is possible. This rule by a dominant and different race nearly always brings about harsh economic conditions to the subject races.

Somewhat the same situation as exists in Russia is found also in Austria-Hungary. In Austria where the German and in Hungary where the Magyar is politically dominant over the Slav and other races, intolerable economic conditions are the lot of the subject races. The Pole is oppressed as much by the Austrian as by the Russian and German; the Slovenian and Servian suffer also from the Austrian; the Slovak from the Magyar; the Jew is persecuted by all. Among our foreign born from Austria, at the taking of the last census, more than one-fourth reported Polish as their mother tongue, while others spoke Bohemian, German, Yiddish, and Slovenian. The Poles occupy a prominent place among those contributing to our foreign born, the number here now exceeding 938,000. The largest number—nearly one-half of the total—came from Russia, and the next largest from Austria.

In the states of the Balkan Peninsula and in both European and Asiatic Turkey somewhat similar conditions are responsible for emigration. In the Balkan States we only recently witnessed the

population rebelling against Turkish misrule. The immigration to the United States from Turkey in Europe includes principally Greeks, Bulgarians, Servians, Montenegrins, Hebrews, Turks and Armenians. The coming of the Armenians dates from the Kurdish atrocities, which were marked by horrible butcheries and massacres. Our immigration from Turkey in Asia is comprised most largely of Greeks, with a sprinkling of Turks and Hebrews.

All this being true it is not difficult to answer the question as to the effect of the present war upon future European immigration to the United States. Changes in sovereignty and in geographical boundaries will be followed by repressive and oppressive measures designed among other things to wipe out national memories, racial traditions, and even to prevent the use of mother tongues. Not to expect these things would be to assume a sudden and remarkable transformation in the fundamentals of race domination. Nor can we expect a discontinuance of those racial factors which have given us so much of our past immigration.

The effect then of the present war will be to continue immigration to our shores. I know there are those who believe that the effect of the war will be to diminish the immigration flood. But such an opinion is contrary to the facts of history, and when we try to raise the curtain separating the present from the future and to peer into that future, I submit that history is a much better guide than personal opinion.

Every European war during the past one hundred years has been followed by increased immigration to the United States. The struggles of the Napoleonic period were the first of these, and following their termination there swept onto our shores the first large volume of immigration. Next came the wars of the European revolutionary period when the oppressed populations, freed by the corporal-emperor from the age-long superstition of the divine right of kings, attempted to throw off the yoke of monarchy. Being mostly unsuccessful these also resulted in increased immigration to the United States. Among these were the Polish revolution against Russia, that of the Bohemians against Germany, the Hungarian revolution, the Belgian insurrection, the wars of Italy, and the revolutionary outbreaks in Germany. The great wars of Prussia in the sixties and seventies against the Danes, then the Austrians, and later the French, also increased our immigration.

When the present great war is at an end—when the populations of Europe are released from fighting and freed from the manacles of militarism—when they are at liberty to take up again their peaceful occupations—Europe will not be what it was before the war began. Economic maladjustment will have set in, burdensome taxes with which to meet the cost of the struggle will be levied by all the governments; capital will have been destroyed, even anticipated income will have been spent, and harsh economic conditions will ensue among the people. Economic distress will be inevitable. All this is no prophecy. It is merely the teaching of past wars.

But it is not so much the situation in Europe following this war as the conditions in the United States that must be regarded as the determining factor in considering the probabilities as to future immigration.

There are many disputed points about immigration but it cannot be disputed that present-day immigration moves and is governed by economic conditions in and the facilities for reaching the country to which the alien migrates more than by adverse conditions in his home country. Both the statistics of emigration of any particular country and those of immigration and emigration of the United States government prove this conclusively. Nearly every report upon emigration from Europe made by United States consuls substantiates this statement.

The extremely close relation which the development of ocean transportation has brought about between European countries and the United States has made the masses of Europe peculiarly sensitive to the economic and especially the industrial conditions in this country. It has in particular affected, and continues to affect even more strikingly than formerly, the volume of our immigration. At the present time immigration reflects, with the accuracy of a tide gauge, the rise and fall in our industrial prosperity. If one knew nothing at all about our panics and periods of business revival, he would be able to tell the years of their occurrence and the length of time their effects continued merely by studying closely the statistics of immigration. This is much more true today than in years past. It is to be expected that at the close of the war the great trans-Atlantic steamships, which have become mere ferry boats plying between the two sides of the Atlantic, in that the immigrant can

now reach the United States within at most ten days or two weeks, will resume their trade.

And when they do they will be confronted by one of the most remarkable industrial revivals this country has ever experienced. It would take too long and try your patience too much to attempt to introduce here the evidence on this point. All we have to do, however, to be convinced, is to remember that this is not the Millennium; that the United States has hardly begun the development of its material resources; that these are in such abundance as to give to us wealth beyond human comprehension; that there is a Tomorrow when the enormous amount of capital now being destroyed will be replaced; that this country even under the stress of European war conditions is accumulating a surplus of capital unprecedented in its history and that this capital, when released from the fetters of fear, will start industry and business on an era of development and expansion which will more than make up for the present period of retardation.

When this time comes—and it is just around the corner—accompanied by adverse economic conditions among the workers in European countries, the possibilities and opportunities the United States will have to offer to the unskilled worker will be much better than those that are to prevail in any of the countries from which we have been drawing the largest part of our immigration.

But, say some, you must take into consideration the fact that the large number of soldiers being killed in the war will result in decreasing the population there is to draw upon and this in itself will result in a diminished immigration. Whether a fact is important depends upon the other fact by which you measure it. When we are told that ten, fifteen, or twenty thousand men in the very prime of life have been killed in a bloody battle we shudder with horror and magnify the importance of the number. But considered only numerically all the thousands that have been and are still to be destroyed by the war are insignificant when compared with the fact that the great reservoirs of peoples from which we have been drawing most of our immigrants—such countries as Russia, Austria-Hungary, Italy, Greece, Roumania, Servia, Bulgaria, and Turkey—that these reservoirs have a combined population in excess of 291,000,000. This is about two and one-fourth times the entire population of England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales,

Germany, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Holland, Belgium, and Switzerland—the western European sources of our earlier immigration. These vast reservoirs of peoples have so far barely been even tapped by the large immigration streams that in recent years have been flowing from some of them into the United States.

Russia, for instance, has an enormous annual increase in the number of its inhabitants. It is true the government has erected barriers against Slavic emigration. But the experience of that country is very likely to repeat that of other European countries which have attempted by governmental regulation to keep their people at home when stronger economic forces are at work among them drawing them to the United States. At present we receive comparatively few Slavs from Russia. As to our total Russian foreign born of 1,732,000 by far the greater part came during the ten years of the last census period. In view of the possibility that the sluices now retaining the vast multitude of Slavs within the empire are to be raised, we must be prepared to meet the pouring forth of a flood of emigrants the like of which the world has never seen and which will make our recent large immigration appear insignificant.

Again, Austria-Hungary has a population of about 47,000,000, some 5,000,000 more than England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Today it already holds third place among the countries of the world contributing to our foreign born population. And immigration from that country had only just begun before the war opened. Of the total of more than 3,000,000 arrivals from Austria-Hungary since 1860 more than 2,000,000 came during the ten years only preceding 1910. All indications point to a continuance of this large immigration from Austria-Hungary at the close of the war. Somewhat similar statements are true of Italian immigration to this country.

Conjecturing in *The American Commonwealth* as to the future of immigration Mr. James Bryce says:

It may, therefore, be expected that the natives of these parts of Europe, such as Russia, Poland, and South Italy, where wages are lowest and conditions least promising, will continue their movement to the United States until there is a nearer approach to an equilibrium between the general attractiveness of life for the poorer classes in the Old World and in the New.

European and Asiatic Turkey have a population of 24,000,000, Persia of nearly 8,000,000, Roumania of 6,000,000, Bulgaria of not quite 4,000,000, and Servia of about 3,000,000. These countries also show recent increases in their immigration to the United States. The foreign born here from Roumania, for instance, increased more than fourfold the last census period—from about 15,000 to nearly 66,000. Bulgaria, Servia, Montenegro, and Turkey not specified, had a combined population in this country in 1910 in excess of 26,000, whereas ten years before it was not of sufficient importance to be enumerated separately by the census. The immigration from Bulgaria, Servia, and Montenegro in a single year rose to more than 27,000. During the ten years preceding 1910 our foreign born from Turkey in Europe increased from less than 10,000 to nearly 29,000. Turkey in Asia gave us a foreign born population in 1910 of almost 60,000, whereas ten years before there was none enumerated by the census.

There is the possibility, yes, even the probability, that within the coming years these races, now comparatively strangers among our foreign born population, may become as numerous in the United States as have those from Russia, Austria-Hungary and Italy in the decade just closed.

Thus in southern and eastern Europe and western Asia great reservoirs of races and peoples were recently beginning to be tapped by the ocean steamship lines. No one can conceive for these racial groups any possible betterment in their economic condition growing out of the present war. If anything it will be worse, not better, and such as to increase their emigration.

In consequence immigration to the United States for the coming years promises to be in even greater volume than that of the past decade and more. The larger part of it—virtually all of it—will come from countries where the standard of living of the masses is very little if any above the mere cost of the coarsest subsistence. Unrestricted, this immigration will continue indefinitely until more of an equilibrium is established between the low economic rewards of toilers in those countries and the higher compensation to the workers in our own democratic society. This result can come about only through a slow and gradual process of economic adjustment. It will mean to our citizen-workers a low wage and a low standard

of living that are not in conformity with the proper development of a democratic society and republican institutions.

It means even more. It means that at this critical period it is imperative for us "as a people whose earlier hopes have been shocked by the hard blows of experience," to pause and take invoice "of the heterogeneous stocks of humanity that we have admitted to the management of our great political enterprise." Not only to pause and take invoice but also to examine carefully what it is that this immigration is doing to our democratic institutions. Do not the pitifully low wages paid in many of our industries and the physically injurious low standard of living of the workers in many of our industrial centers mean anything to you? Does not unemployment, such as was so shockingly in evidence in all our large cities the past winter, indicate to you that there is something wrong somewhere? Do not child-labor, the industrial labor of women, the congestion of population, long hours of work, the rising death-toll from preventable accidents and occupational diseases, the startling increase in poverty among our industrial classes, the discarding by our industries of men in their forties for the labor of the much younger immigrants—do not these raise up in your mind any relation to immigration? The fact is there is a relation, a very close relation, between these social horrors and immigration.

There is one possible event that alone will stop this threatening inundation. This is restrictive legislation by the Congress approved by the President of the United States. These representatives of the American people can control the effects of those economic forces that otherwise are to give to us this increasing immigration of the future. Is not the present a most opportune time for such action? Should not we as a people stop at least a moment in our mad rush after mere wealth and take the time and exercise the forethought necessary to put our house in order so far as it is being disordered by immigration?

With the tremendous interests at stake in the present great European war, with the upheaval in the social and economic life of the European populations, and with the interruption to ocean travel, immigration is now at its lowest ebb tide. During the ten months following the declaration of war—from July to May—373,000 immigrant aliens arrived in this country. Of this total, those coming in July and August alone, and who had started on their

way before the war began, amounted to as much as 33 per cent. These 373,000 immigrants comprise the smallest number arriving in any like period of which we have a record. They are 818,000 fewer than for the same months of the preceding year and 691,000 fewer than in 1913. They are 107,000 fewer than one-half their number would have been but for the war if measured by the average of the period for the past seven years. It is clear from these statistics that the temporary effect of the war has been to diminish the number of incoming aliens.

The war has also had an effect upon emigration, and this effect has been to give us an increase in the number of aliens. It has reduced the number of outgoing aliens to less than they would have been under ordinary circumstances; that is, it has had the effect of keeping in the United States many immigrants who otherwise would have returned to Europe. Every one of the ten months to May, with the single exception of August, shows less emigration than in the same months of the preceding year and, excepting July and August, less than in 1913. Since July the number of departing aliens has been about 345,000, which is 248,000 fewer than during the same period in 1908 and less than that of the same months in any of the last four years. It is about 152,000 less than the average for the same ten months for the past seven years. This explains in part the unusual seriousness of the unemployed problem which was so acute in our large eastern cities the past winter, many of the aliens who but for the war would have returned to their European homes being compelled to remain here.

Immigration has steadily declined since the outbreak of the war until in April it was not one-fourth what it was in April, 1914, the decrease being from more than 142,000 to about 32,000 monthly arrivals. Emigration also has decreased—from about 50,000 in April, 1914, to about 18,000 in April, 1915. For the months of August, November, December and January, emigration exceeded immigration by more than 34,000—that is, this many more departed than arrived.

We should take advantage of today's temporary cessation in immigration to erect proper means of defense against the probable inundation of tomorrow. And as a part of these measures of defense there should be created by federal legislation such governmental machinery as will, in coöperation with state and private

employment bureaus, give us in the future a more or less accurate measurement of the anticipated needs of American industries for this rough, unskilled immigrant labor at the standard or American rate of wages. The demand being thus ascertained the supply can be regulated to this measurement by legislative enactment through already existing administrative machinery. In this way the present haphazard system, which now invariably operates to produce an over-supply of this labor in all our industrial centers, can be coördinated and made to work for our common good instead of to our social injury. Already we have the nucleus around which this machinery can be built. This is the Division of Information of the Bureau of Immigration of the Department of Labor of the United States government. In addition to its reorganization along the lines indicated, it should be given supervision over all private employment agencies and so-called labor exchanges engaged in interstate commerce.

In the face of the facts should we not subordinate sympathy for the immigrant to that humanitarianism which holds that America's highest duty to mankind is to make the great experiment of an educated democracy the most triumphant success that can possibly be attained? Shall we permit sympathy for the immigrant to determine our decision as to the proper course we should take in our policy towards future immigration? By all means this great movement of peoples should be restricted by legislation within the narrow channel of the legitimate demand of our industries for unskilled labor. It should not be permitted any longer to rush in helter-skelter to flood our American industries with its cheap labor and our industrial centers with its low standard of living.

